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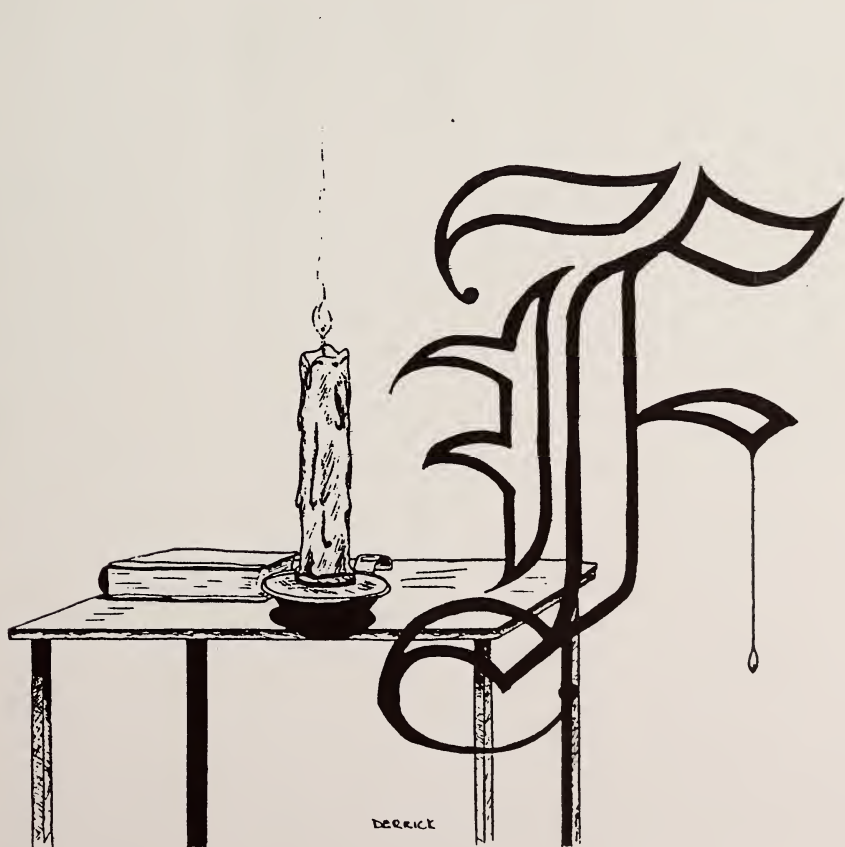
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Fiction

*"And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of toast and tea."*

T. S. Eliot



Baby Rose

Myra pushes against the rusty screen door as her Uncle Sam yells, "You hear 'bout that woman namin' 'er baby God?"

The warm April wind slams the sagging door back in Myra's face. Sam continues to tell Myra, his twelve-year-old great grandniece about a rockin' roll floozy naming her baby God as he and Hattie, his wife for sixty-five years, follow Myra onto their front porch. Sam Tucker loves a thunder storm more than a long nap in his favorite chair, and grumbling thunder rolling in from the west promises him a good one.

The century-old house appears ready to capsize with the next Mississippi storm. Sam and Hattie shuffle their feet along the rotting boards. Sam creeps toward the low side of the porch and Hattie moves cautiously toward the high side. Myra drags a creaky oak rocker to the center of the porch, climbs over the arm rest, sinks down in the cowhide-bottom chair and pulls her long bare legs up close to her thin body. Her father drives a truck and stops by occasionally to leave a little money and tell a big lie about how he'll be back soon to take her with him to live in Florida. The child's mother ran off to Nevada with an insurance salesman from Gulfport and left Myra at Sam and Hattie's over three years ago.

Thick black curls blow across her haunting blue eyes as she watches Sam grow more excited with each distant growl of thunder.

Myra searches the marbled grey skies like a hawk hunting for prey. "Look, Uncle Sam. Look at that cloud over yonder. It's just full of rain. How old are you, Uncle Sam?"

"Your Aunt Hattie and me are the same age, born two days apart, and we both pray neither one of us will have to live more than twenty-four hours without the other."

Hattie points to the Mount Zion Baptist Church across the gravel road and in a jittery voice explains, "Honey, if the church folks find out how old we really are, they'll make us move up with the old people in Sunday School and Sam and me we're real happy right where we are with the sixty-five to seventy-year-olds. We been there twenty years and we ain't gonna promote up now. Are we, Sam Tucker?"

Sam shakes his head, no. His wide grin reveals an empty mouth except for three yellowish-brown teeth, jagged as a jack-o-lantern. He sucks on a dangling tooth, runs his bony fingers through his thin white hair and moves farther down the low side of the porch to inspect the tumbling clouds.

By degrees Hattie gets to the high side of the porch, and she drops heavily into a worn-out rocker to admire her snow-colored azaleas with bleeding pink centers. Bright red geraniums, purple iris and yellow daisies surround the high end of the porch, along with six old

tires, an old porcelain sink, a catawba vine hunting for something to run on, a few scattered calla lilies and Hattie's own hybrid of white satin rose bushes loaded with giant buds. Nothing grows at the low side of the porch because three large oak trees block the sun. Hattie's cloudy blue eyes delight at the beauty of her hard work. But the sight of a honeysuckle vine snaking through one of her treasured azalea bushes brings her to the edge of the rocker: she plots to get rid of the killer.

Minnie, the cat, is stretched out on the top step cleaning her ragged grey ear meticulously, while her young ebony son Scram plays with fluttering leaves.

Sam calls, "Myra, come on over to my side of the porch for a minute."

Myra leaves the comfort of the droopy-bottom chair to join him. With his finger and one good eye Sam points up the gravel road that runs in front of his house. His right eye is bad and stays in the same upward position all the time. He says he can see perfect out of it, but Hattie says he is a liar, that the eye is dead blind and been dead for more than twenty-five years.

They watch the sluggish green car sitting low to the ground stop in front of the cemetery. The Mount Zion Baptist Church, recently modernized with white vinyl siding, and a small decaying cemetery stare directly at Sam and Hattie's listing house.

A small whirlwind lifts dust and tiny pieces of gravel into the air, leaving grit to settle on the car and back on the rarely used road. A waving hand pops out from the driver's window of the car, but quick as a thought the hand disappears, and three large people begin to emerge.

"They not good religious folks," Sam mumbles.

Hattie leans forward in her rocker, grabs hold of the weak railing and pulls herself to her unsteady feet and fusses. "Sam, why you sayin' that? Now don't go and be mean."

"Hattie, I own the land that church is sittin' on and I own that clangless bell hangin' in that steeple. That bell belonged to my daddy's church in Belzoni, only thing that survived the 1910 church fire. And I own the land them dead is buried in so I can say anything I want to. Willis is my best friend, and there ain't nothin' I wouldn't do for him or his wife Maudy, but they ain't good religious folks. Y'all come on. I forgot I had promised Willis I'd help him do somethin'."

They step over Minnie who refuses to move even at Hattie's harsh scolding and walk into the front yard full of old egg-less hens. Sam stops in front of his faded blue, 1956 pick-up sitting on four flat tires. Sam's son, Harold Dean, chained the truck to an oak tree near the low side of the porch over a year ago. Sam shakes his head, sucks his teeth and throws his arms in the air. His arms flail around as fiercely as the oak branches high above him.

In a loud strained voice he admits, "Now I did hit that fire hydrant in downtown Florence, but y'all know I'm a good driver and hittin' one fire hydrant in forty years of drivin' ain't good 'nough reason to chain up a man's truck. Is it, youngun?" Myra shakes her head, no, and scrawls her name in the dust on the hood of the truck.

Sam's voice drops, but he is still angry. "The police and mayor completely overlooked the broken fire hydrant, but it was Miss Katie Neal Sojourner that got all upset just 'cause 'er yard was flooded for a couple days." Sam reaches out, pats his truck and sings in a nursery rhyme way, "Good ol' blue. . . . I love you. . . . Me and you. . . . What we gonna' do."

Hattie tugs at Myra's arm and whispers, "He ain't the same since Harold Dean went and chained up his truck."

Sam and Hattie are grunting and panting as they enter the cemetery. Myra slows down to admire the rows and rows of yellow buttercups nodding their heads in approval. Tiny, delicate wild flowers embrace the weeds that flow into the pasture beyond the barbed wire fence separating the church and cemetery from a neighbor's pasture. A diseased pecan tree stands in the middle of the graves. Moss covers the headstones; two have fallen over and broken. The three large people stand with their backs to Sam, Hattie, and Myra.

Sam turns to Hattie, "I don't know who them two fat women are. Do you?" And then he yells, "Warm day, ain't it."

Willis turns slowly towards them and replies, "Yep, real warm."

Myra stops. In the man's weathered arms is cradled a small white casket, no bigger than a man's shoe box. A shovel leans against his bulging stomach. Myra steps closer to Willis; she is amazed at the tiny box.

Sam and Hattie carry on a conversation about Willis's disfigured hand lying across the top of the tiny casket. Willis tells them the hand's about the same and continues with the whole gruesome story of how he got it hung in a disker. They have heard the story many times, but they enjoy it once again.

Willis ends the story by telling them, "I wish it would of chewed the damn thing clean off."

Hattie asks who the two women are. Each wear over-washed denim dresses with no belts. They are elephantine. Their black pump shoe tops are spread out over their soles. No stockings, but matching dingy slips fall two inches below their dress hems. Their orangey-red hair matches the cow's coat that ambles along the fence. The women stare at whatever their puffy owl eyes fix upon. Simultaneously, they fold their flabby arms under their massive bosoms and tromp soldier-like back to the car.

"They too heavy for their legs. Cain't stand more than five minutes. They my baby's brother's youngest girls. They twins, identical twins," says Willis.

Myra continues to stare at the mauled hand and dwarf-like casket as Sam asks, "You want to bury it here?"

"Her name is Rose, Miz Hattie. They named her after Miz Maudy's favorite flowers, the lily and the rose. Lily Rose Van Zandt. Miz Maudy is staying with the baby's mama. Baby Rose would have been our very first great-grandchild."

"That's a real pretty name, Willis," says Hattie as she dabs at tears running down her face.

Hattie holds out her arms and tells Willis, "Let me hold Baby Rose while ya'll dig the grave. They'll be plenty of shade right here for her." She pats the coffin gently and a fine mist of rain begins to dampen their hair.

"Why ain't the baby's daddy down here diggin' Instead of us two worn-out, half-dead mules?" laughs Sam.

"Well, the daddy done up and run off three months ago. He don't know nothin' 'bout Baby Rose being born," says Willis.

At that Hattie lets out a pitiful cry and rocks Baby Rose from side to side as if she were rocking a baby taking a late afternoon nap. The wind blows a few dead limbs from the pecan tree while the dark clouds hanging above their heads threaten them with lightning. Sam and Willis argue over who is going to dig until raindrops begin to change the smell of the late afternoon air.

Myra reaches out for the shovel, "I'll dig, Mr. Willis."

Neither one likes the idea, but Willis hands her the shovel and sits down on the ground. Sam joins him. Myra hesitates for a moment. She draws a deep breath and jumps on the shovel breaking the soft ground. The broken earth releases a sweet wine smell as she digs deeper and deeper. Sam tells Willis he'll take over, but Willis argues he should be the one to finish so Myra continues to dig while they fuss.

Quarter-size raindrops begin to fall along with the thick mist. Hattie takes off her red-checked apron and spreads it over the casket. She uses the corner of the draped apron to wipe her eyes and nose.

Hattie whispers to Willis, "I'm goin' over to the church yard real quick to get some fresh flowers. You hold the baby."

As soon as Hattie leaves Willis sets Baby Rose on the ground next to Sam and tells them both he'll be right back. He stands up, straightens his tight overalls, peers into the roughly dug hole and says, "That's a real good job you doin', Myra. What do you think, Sam?"

Sam crawls over on his hands and knees, peers in, and agrees with Willis. "Child, I couldn't do a better job myself."

Willis helps Sam to get up off the dank cold ground while Myra, excited by their praise, digs faster. Sam and Willis offer her suggestions and their help, but Myra turns a deaf ear and continues her frantic digging.

A few minutes later, Hattie returns panting and clutching a small bunch of buttercups, one large white satin rose bud and a long stem calla lily. She stops at a grave and disposes of some dead flowers sitting in a moss-covered jar, half-full of water. With flowers and jar she returns to Sam's side. Her eyes dash around searching their arms for the casket and when she sees Baby Rose sitting on the ground she explodes.

"Willis Van Zandt, get that baby girl off the ground this instant."

In a fluster she moves toward a sick-looking Willis and in a piercing voice scolds all of them. "Just 'cause there ain't no preacher here or Christian service here, ain't no reason to be disrespectful to God's greatest treasure. Sweet child. Give that baby to me this instant."

Willis grabs Baby Rose and hands her to Hattie with his head hanging on his chest and his lip stuck out like a five-year-old child.

Myra stops digging and asks, "Mr. Willis, I think I've dug deep enough, don't you?"

"Looks alright to me. What you think, Sam?"

"Looks good to me," sniffs Sam.

Thunder jolts them into action. "Let's at least say a prayer," says Hattie.

"Alright, Miz Hattie, I'll say one," responds Willis.

"Dear Lord, we sorry you didn't see fit to let this baby, Baby Lily Rose Van Zandt, live longer than seven hours, but I guess you got your reasons. Amen."

Hattie has something different in mind and gives Willis a long hard look right after he says, Amen. Sam's bad eye has been staring at Willis all through the prayer, but his good eye has been watching the storm moving in on top of them.

Willis nervously steps back, twists his mauled right hand with his left fingers and proclaims, "I cain't do it."

Sam complains, "My bad back and knee just ain't gonna let me get down that far, or I'd do it."

Hattie is busy mourning for everyone. Myra lays the shovel down, wipes her hands on her wet shorts and reaches out toward Hattie for Baby Rose. Myra shivers at the touch of the cold wet metal. Willis corrects her, "Turn the baby around so 'er head won't be at the foot."

Myra prays quietly to herself, "Please, please, Lord don't let me drop'er. If I do Aunt Hattie will surely faint." Myra drops to her knees and begins to inch Baby Rose down into the dark shelter of the earth, but she realizes she will have to lie down on the muddy ground before she will be able to set Baby Rose on the bottom. She lies down on her stomach, still holding tight to Baby Rose. "I'm straining as hard as I can, but my hands are wet and she's slipping away from me. What am I gonna' do? I don't want to just let her drop."

At the next violent flash of lightning Sam warns, "Let 'er go or they'll have to bury all of us!"

A muted thud lets them know she has reached the bottom. Sam shovels the dirt in almost before Myra can get her arms out. The tiny white casket is lost from sight. Hattie sets the moss-covered jar at the head of the grave and jams the flowers inside. Willis picks up his shovel and bellows a thank you as he runs toward the car holding the twins. The green car, leaving as reluctantly as it came, turns back up the gravel road.

All the way back to the house Sam admires the storm. Hattie shouts something about digging up one of her prize white satin rose bushes and setting it out next to Baby Rose, and Myra climbs the steps slowly letting the rain rinse away the layer of dirt covering her.

Hattie pats Sam on the shoulder, "Sam, you're a good man. I know you been savin' that plot in the shade for yourself. It's a fine thing you did givin' that spot to that lil ol' baby. Now, I'm going to get some strong, chicory coffee goin'. We all got to get out of these wet clothes. Myra get out of the rain."

Sam sucks his teeth and grins as Hattie disappears into the unlit house. He and Myra stare at ol' blue shining in the rain.

"Uncle Sam, do you think ol' blue will start?"

"You bet ol' blue will start. She'll crank right up. I got the key to 'er. What I don't have is the key to that chain that's wrapped around 'er axle and that confounded tree."

He rubs his wet head and speaks in a pitiful childish voice, "I'm too old to drive. I know it. I might run into another fire hydrant and the chief and mayor might not overlook it next time. But I know one thing."

He stares off into the rolling clouds, and he does a little jig with the lightning. After a few minutes Myra interrupts his dance and asks, "What's that you know, Uncle Sam?"

"I know thers some bad folks buried in that cemetery. There's two men that kilt each other in a duel back in the 1800's. They so mean their grave markers won't stand up. There's a man that kilt his whole family back in 1929 and a feller that was murdered at Parchman 'bout twelve-years ago. There's a outlaw sheriff from down in Jackson County and my ol' mule Dobby, meanest mule that ever lived. And every worthless Van Zandt that ever walked the face of the earth, 'ceptin that lil ol' baby."

Sam claps his hands rapidly as if to scare away the waning light. "You know, child, I think I'd rather be buried in Copiah County where my brother and his wife is buried; I'll have to talk to Miz Hattie 'bout that though."

He steals a look back at the cemetery as darkness creeps in among the graves. "I'm cold. Let's us get out of these wet clothes."

Minnie and Scram are curled up in a straight back chair sitting

close to the wall. Sam reaches down and scratches each cat behind the ears and asks, "Minnie, what you think 'bout a mama namin' 'er baby God?"

Minnie replies with a wide yawn and a long stretch. The screen door slams behind Sam, and the smell of strong coffee pours out onto the porch. Myra improvises her own little lightning jig and sings softly, "Me and you . . . What we gonna do," as the nodding daffodils disappear into the dark.

Sandra Cooper
First Place, MICROCOSM Award ;
First Place, MJCCWA Competition

Something in the Wind

Summer has always been a special time for my family. It is the only time of year that the whole family can be together. My sister Val goes to school on the east coast while Mom and I stay here in Austin. Dad travels most of the time but gets a month vacation every year in July.

I long for school to be out every year so that we can all be together. We always travel to Green Bay, Wisconsin, to spend a few weeks on Lake Michigan. The weather there is always fantastic in the summertime. Of course it's hot, but the cool clear water of the lake always seems to relieve me on even the hottest days. This is the way it has been for years, almost a summer tradition. But somehow this year would be different.

I could tell last April that I was changing. Not just because I am a young woman now, or even that I am a senior in high school. No, there is something different in the way I look at life now, something in the wind. That's what my mom always said.

I seem to be a late bloomer. Boys were just never first priority with me. There was always something better to do like reading a good book or riding my pony Molasses. When I was little, I used to pretend that she was a white stallion, and I was a fairy princess. We would ride for hours at a time, the wind blowing through my hair as I lost track of reality. The kids at school think I am strange, but they could never understand the freedom I felt from the world as I rode in my fantasy land.

My mom understands. She always did, though. It is as if everything I am feeling, she has felt, too, once not long ago. We sit for hours sometimes as she shares with me the joys she had while growing up. I can tell she wants to be as much a part of me as I do of her. Listening to her stories makes me feel alive. I feel sorry for all my friends who are missing out on what we share.

For some reason unknown to me, the changes I am feeling make me reluctant to go to my mother as I once had. There are things I don't understand, and although I know she would, I just don't feel right talking to her about them.

My sister and I have never been especially close. She always had a boyfriend or someone else to talk to and never seemed to have much time for me, or maybe I didn't make time for her. We have always been as different as day and night. Even at the cabin in Green Bay, her friend Sharon stays across the lake from us. Val used to paddle a canoe across the lake to go and talk with Sharon. I'm sure they shared secrets about boys, but I was never interested. Maybe it's because she seemed so much older than me. This year I am tempted to ask if I can tag along on these private meetings.

I wonder if my problem could be boys. But why me? I have never had any interest before. They are a pain anyway. Val is always coming home crying about how whoever had done her wrong or stood her up. Maybe I should have listened in on all those conversations and given her some support; then, I wouldn't feel so awkward about going to her now. Regardless of how silly I feel, I think I have to talk to her.

We made the trip as usual, taking the same roads and stopping at the same places along the way, but things still didn't seem normal. The final hour passed as we rolled into Green Bay about noon. Sharon was waiting for us as usual on the steps of our cabin with a soda in one hand and her bathing suit in the other. Val and Sharon always took a dip in the lake before unpacking and settling in. After brief consideration, I decided I wasn't ready for the talk and would join the girls later. Perhaps that was a wise decision. Perhaps that was a mistake. I decided to take a walk instead.

Mom asked me what was wrong. I told her I didn't know. Dad said it was just growing pains and that I'd get over them soon. Mom walked up and hugged me. Recognizing the look in my eye, she told me she understood. I wanted to cry and have her hold me like she did when I was little, but I'm not a little girl anymore. I'm growing into a young woman now; I need time to be alone.

On my walk I met Peter. I've known him since the first summer we came here. We walked for a while and talked about school and different things. The sky seemed especially blue today, the song bird's melody more beautiful than ever. There was something in the wind. Peter was the same little boy I'd known for years, or was he. He looked different, or is it that I looked at him differently. In any event something had definitely changed. Peter walked me home just after dark.

The new moon bounced delicate reflections off the rippling water on the lake; I never noticed this before. As we began to walk up the dirt road to our cabin, he stopped. I felt foolish for a moment, there was total silence as we stared at each other. It seemed like forever. Then he kissed me. Maybe I kissed him. Perhaps we kissed each other. It was short and warm, I could feel myself blushing. We said good night as he promised to see me again tomorrow.

Supper was on the table when I walked in. Dad asked where I was all day, and Val explained that she and Sharon had seen Peter and me walking along the lake. Normally I would have been angry at her accusations, but I only smiled. Mother said I looked like the cat that just ate the canary, but I told her I had had a nice day. There was something in the wind.

**Christine Poe
Brookhaven High School
Scholarship Award**

Arrow Wound

Halting, I lifted the bow and arrow, sighted, pulled back on the string—let the arrow soar through the air. It arked and dove like a then, short-feathered hawk.

The buck thrust through the pine trees. Finishing its fifty-yard flight, the shaft vanished into the brush as well.

Had it sped true? Only one way of finding out. I jogged through the high-bladed grass to look.

Lying on the ground near the trees, an arrow cleanly skewering its neck, lay the deer.

I could almost taste the succulent roast in my mouth.

Kneeling by the buck, I unsheathed my knife. If the animal was still alive, it must be released from any suffering. But it was dead: opened eyes glazed, thick red blood oozing from the wound.

Strange. The shaft . . . the arrow . . . it looked different. Much thicker. Blue and yellow feathers instead of red. And the head, protruding from the other side. Barbed!

This was not the arrow I had shot.

Laughter thundered from the dense foliage. I reared up, knife before me for protection, eyes darting. I couldn't see anyone.

From behind a large oak tree a man emerged, holding an empty bow in both hands as a sign of peace. A tall, hefty man with a leather quiver of blue and yellow arrows slung on his broad back.

"Who are you?" I demanded.

"Well, now." The tanned man chuckled, a smile showing through a black bushy beard. "That's a question worthy of philosophers. Who am I? Am able body for a wandering spirit? Or perhaps a forest ghost doomed to stalk these woods, cheating hunters of their game? Maybe even a figment of your imagination!"

"No, stranger," I said, relaxing, realizing the man meant no harm. "Your name. Your business. Where you're from and where you are going?"

"Questions, questions! Where to begin answering?" He rubbed his beard in mock confusion.

"My name is Allen, Chief of the Scavengers," I said as I placed my knife in its sheath and extended my hand.

"And I am Charles, from the Canadian Islands," answered the tall stranger as he shook my hand. "As to where I am going, I am searching for whatever civilization that has survived and is growing."

"Then I offer you all of the hospitality of my city, Warsend."

"I've never heard of your city. Where is it?"

"It's located directly beneath the Maze, in the old ruins of Los Angeles."

"What's down there?" Inquired Charles.

"There's a tremendous amount of wealth down there, under the ruins of the Maze. Convection heat destroyed some of it, but still—you'd be surprised."

"Valuables? What kind?"

"Underground bank vaults with money—paper, securities, gold, Service Marks. Security tunnels for the jewelry exchange, some of which lead to diamond caches. Canned food. Equipment. More than I can tell you in a few minutes."

"Well, why do they just let it sit down there? How come everybody and their mother isn't down there, ripping it out of the ground?"

"Think about that, Charles. Think about the structural damage the Quake left behind. The after shocks alone were more powerful than any quake that hit California in the preceding hundred years. This entire area is a deathtrap. There is wealth to be had, but the cost is too high for anyone but a Scavenger."

"So why do you do it?"

"As you know, all of the national governments in the world have collapsed and the small city-states are heading down the same path. We are fast heading for a second Dark Ages. I hope to build a city where civilization might be preserved until the darkness passes. I don't even know why I have told you about the city. Except for yourself, only the inhabitants of Warsend know of its existence."

"Why so secretive?" asked Charles.

"Because the city's survival will depend, in part, on the rivaling factions that fight above us not knowing of us. If they knew, they would come to take whatever we have and destroy our schools, homes, churches, and, most importantly, our libraries."

"Why are the libraries so important?"

"You know, it isn't that you can't get information in electronic waves, or microfilm, or disk, or cube, or any of the other forms—tape, holographic computer feed. Tell me, Charles—what's the similarity between all the modes of information storage I've just named?"

Charles scratched his beard. "They don't take up as much space as books, I guess."

"True enough—but as far as I'm concerned, the difference is that they all require an external power source. Do you understand that that makes you dependent on others?"

"Not cubes. There are plenty of solar-powered cube-readers. One sunny day a week, and you're set."

"That's right, but you are still dependent upon others to repair your viewer if it breaks down—the more advanced a civilization is, the more inter-dependent it is."

"So?"

"It just seems to me that the most valuable thing that any human has is the ability to educate himself, to find out about the world around him, to develop his primary organ of perception, his brain. And that basic, inalienable right should be as independent of external factors as possible. Once a book is printed and acquired, it's yours."

"I think I see your point," interrupted Charles. "Printed books and preserved ideas in those books have always been the salvation of civilization."

"Shall you accept my offer to the city?" I asked.

"Indeed, I shall!" exclaimed Charles.

"Ah, don't forget your deer, my friend," I said.

"What's this? My deer? The deer is truly ours," said Charles as he easily hoisted the buck into the car and spun it around to show my arrow, deeply buried in the deer's side.

"Then we all win," I ventured as we made our way to the city.

"What's that, Sir Buck?" asked Charles, glancing over his broad shoulders to look at the deer. "Sir Buck takes some offense to your last remark, for he says that he didn't win!"

As I looked at the large, friendly hunter and at the buck slung on his shoulders, I swear that the twinkling of amusement which I had seen in Charlie's eyes now shone in the eyes of the buck. I knew from that moment that Charles would be an ally.

Eddie Tuneburg
Second Place, MICROCOSM Award

The Final Kill

I saw just one. It was small and thin compared to the others. I had been hunting since nightfall, but this final kill would be an easy one, easier than the others before had been.

I leap but miss my prey. I catch only the beast's rough, thick skin. I spin around for another attack leaping for the throat. I connect this time as I watch blood and bits of bones gush from the wound I make in the small frail throat. I drag the body off into the brush and put it with the others I have killed earlier. This is just another to add to the small pile.

Why had they hunted me so? The beast had taken my land and killed my mate and two children. It had driven off all of my friends and left me to find my way home alone. The only one—the only one—the only—one.

Enough! I have to get the rest of the beasts before morning. I can't afford to be spotted now. I have too much to do before dawn.

I creep forward a few yards and can just hear the beasts moving about again. They seem to be circling in different directions.

There are only four left. These will be the easiest to kill. I wait patiently for them to move again so that I can attack, but they remain still. I wait a long time listening intently for any betraying sound. It seems endless. Finally they divide and begin to leave the area.

Good! One of the beasts stays behind. The others trail off into the darkness.

It is time. This beast will have to fall tonight. I need to rid myself of him so I can go home again safely.

The next few minutes speed by. I sit back and decide what to do. I know the time is now. I see my opportunity and lunge at the beast. I easily crush his small, frail skull with a powerful slash to his head. These beasts are all alike. Each wished him dead; but this time, he was the victor. He was invincible. No beast could touch him.

I pile the body on the heap with quickness. Then I return to my last kill.

Suddenly I stop. There's something ahead. Are there other beasts near? I see nothing, but I feel their presence. I look about. Nothing is visible in the darkness. Where can they be? I look about again. I sniff the air anxiously as a large black net falls upon me. The beasts have tricked me. They are in the trees. I have lost the last hunt.

The beasts drop down and look at me. They point their sticks at me.

I watch as they take aim and fire. The noise explodes in my ears. My blood stains the ground.

The beasts point again. This time there is no noise. Only silence . . . and darkness . . . and death.

* * * * *

"Well, I think that's the last one. The other three weren't nearly as hard to kill."

"Yeah, but the others were a lot smaller."

"I guess you're right. That's the last time a cougar kills anyone in our hunting club."

Kevin Landress
Wesson Attendance Center
Second Place, Short Story



The Stranger

Dark clouds foretelling of rain hung from the air. The lamplights above the street made eerie glows on the sidewalk; and as it started to rain, it looked as if the concrete path only soaked up the droplets like a huge sponge.

It was then that we saw him. He was hurrying down the street, swirling and turning.

At first we were mystified. We watched more closely and tried to see all of his features although he was still some blocks away.

Dressed in black, we watched him. He was clothed in such a dark, deep shade of mourning that we became frightened. We ran indoors.

His whistling sounded somewhat off-key, but this distracted us only for a moment. We continued to watch as he made his twirling dance through the street like a parade.

It was storming now, with trees waving wildly at the mysterious visitor. The rain formed a river in the gutter, but still he danced. He beckoned all to follow him and to dance with him.

We had been watching him from the windows of our house. These windows now yearned to be part of the melody of the whistling stranger. They leaned outwards until I thought they would break. Oh, the sheer magnetism he had!

But it scared us, this constant pull of the black caped stranger; and we drew quickly away into the center of the room. As we retreated, the windows broke loose from their oppressors, the panes. The shiny fragmented diamonds ran through the air and chimed in with the celestial whistling.

Crazed with the desire to join the musical, my sister fled to the demon as if she had wings on her feet. I yelled for her, but she could hear nothing but the enchanting song, which had become to me a menacing growl uttered from the guttural chords deep within the creature. I watched as she flew through the air and became one with the monster.

I yelled, and I screamed, and I swore at the evil manifestation which had once looked so enchanting. In my rage I flung books and rocks and wood at it, only to have them thrown back in my face with superhuman strength.

Horror stricken, I watched as he departed with my sister, just as the Pied Piper took all of the young loved ones to a better place far away.

I sat in the rubble and cried for my sister. She and the tornado were gone.

Jena Melançon
Brookhaven High School
Third Place, Short Story

Poetry

"If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry." — Emily Dickinson



DERRICK

Sestina For Kheli

Greeting the quiet morning, my daughter
Eases into life, and waiting eyes
Extol this precious gift of Jehovah.
Through the wondrous way of nature,
Exhausted, exhilarated, I become the mother
Of the beloved new-born child, Kheli.

Kheli Elisabeth Jill, this little Kheli,
Silky black hair adorns our daughter,
Two apple-round cheeks, gifts from mother,
Upturned nose beneath Daddy's blue eyes.
Precious first child, such a friendly nature.
Beautiful, even more, healthy, praise Jehovah.

Each day brings reasons to thank Jehovah,
Thank you for love and laughter and Kheli,
Sharing her virgin experience with nature,
Astounded by clouds, trees and pups, my daughter.
My hearts swells with the wonder of her eyes,
Delighted smiles shout I-Love-You, Mother.

Protected by father, nurtured by mother,
Three summers gone, she whispers prayers to Jehovah
As blonde curls fall from her bowed head. Sleepy eyes
blink one last time for the sandman and Kheli.
No weary thoughts distress this sleeping daughter
In perfect harmony with herself and nature.

"Did you know God made everything in nature,
Giraffes and ants, flamingos and aardvarks, Mother?
Did you know He made your little daughter?"
Lord, Jesus, God, Yahweh, Emmanuel, Messiah, Jehovah,
Are but a few of his precious names, Kheli,
Creator of tender young hearts and trusting blue eyes.

Too soon, a young man gazes into her eyes.
Tall in stature, handsome, a kindly nature.
He pledges his love and desire to marry Kheli.
A happy young woman leaves father and mother.
They ask blessings on this marriage, Jehovah;
In your love find strength and happiness, daughter.

With joyous eyes eventually she's to be a mother.
This is nature: life shall continue, praise Jehovah.
And for Kheli: a strong son or a loving daughter.

Sestina For Papa

A Mississippi farmer was my papa.
Long and hard, he labored for his family,
Evident by his scarred and callous hands.
Impressed even me, a mere young boy,
Oldest son of my father, youngest son
of him, my Grandpa, Louis.

Honored to have his first name, my second, Louis
All your kind love is not forgotten, Papa.
Something I hope to leave for my son,
A treasure of love for his family.
Soft hearted, soft spoken, my joy, my boy,
The good I've seen I'd place in his hands.

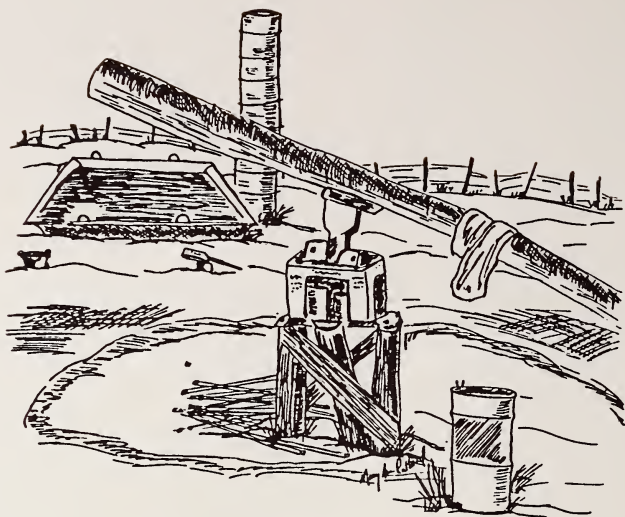
The same love shows in my father's hands,
Retiring, then farming, the footsteps of Louis.
What better example could be for a boy
Than the love and concern of his papa
To see that there's food for his family.
I must say I'm proud I'm his son.

And then I think about my son
With his life and future in my hands.
Can I carry the torch for my family
As my father and Grandfather Louis?
Will he remember and love his papa
When he is no longer a young boy?

If memories when I was a boy
Were the way it will be for my son,
I'm sure he will love his papa
And learn to show love with his hands;
Treasure the ways of Great Grandpa, Louis
And be proud to be part of his family.

For now I'll think of my family
And do the best I can for my boy;
Remember good hearted, caring Louis,
Keep the respect of my father and son,
Do what I know how to do with my hands
And one day be like Papa.

I'm proud to be my family's oldest son.
I'll say a long prayer for my boy and his hands
And honor the memory of Louis, my papa.



The Molasses Maker

In Papa's yard yesterday,
I stepped into a time I never knew,
Into a time when necessity taught
this artisan his task.

My thoughts return to him:
The sweet, sticky steam touching his face,
a face with character, wrinkles of time,
a lost art of years gone by.

He knew his craft.
His watchful gaze, like a King Fisher's eye,
knew when the time was right,
right to skim hot white foam from the top
of his new old molasses pan.

Mary Ann Rutland
MICROCOSM Award

Dad

Sometimes,

 If I close my eyes really tight
 everything gets blurry and I only see salt and pepper.

But it feels better

 because anything else or nothing at all
 is better than everything.

And when I think about how you used to hold me and sing to me,
 something rips way down inside of me

 In a place that psychologists have a fancy name for.

And sometimes I panic

 because I can't remember what you look like . . .

 So I run to that picture of you and my mother,
 and then I remember again . . .

 but I can't feel you.

And after you left

 I got myself together and pressed all the unanswered
 questions into a straight line
 and hid the box away . . .

But I hear noises on the inside and they're knocking
 and I get confused—

 because I don't understand death.

But sometimes,

 If I close my eyes tight enough
 everything gets blurry and I only see salt and pepper.

Peggy Morrill
Crystal Springs High School
Scholarship Award

The Realm of Sleep

All seems to be a blur;
Darkness crowds me.
Confusion clouds my mind.
Leap! they say,
Go ahead, take the plunge!
But why should I close my eyes?
Maybe . . .

The heaviness of eyelids,
The disease of a disastrous day,
Drained to the core, searching for comfort.

But, suppose I miss and find fitful fright?
Suppose comfort drifts farther away.
But I must, I must take the risk;
Seek slumber in the hope of comfort.
So, I leap, I take the plunge into worlds,
Worlds unknown, unconquered.
But, through hope, sure to please,
And surprise my weary self
At the quick coming of day,
A day for remembered joy,
Of gracious thought, a well-spent night.

Cynthia Bailey

Darkness Comes

Nightfall brings a rain of stars
That fade before they hit the ground.
The moon slides behind a black cloud
Never to be seen again.
The darkness grows thicker and
Soon chokes out all forms of light.
Sunset is but a grayish shadow
On the horizon, foretelling doom
When darkness comes.

Blessed Curse

I reel beneath the blessed curse
Of tangled silent screaming verse
That comes so easily in thought
Yet disappears when writing's sought.

How many sonnets doomed to die
Would otherwise on paper lie,
If memory could somehow find
The perfect words it left behind?

Confusion clouding verbal sight,
I stumble onward, left to right,
Scratching silent screaming verse
On pages bearing blessed curse.

Clark Manuel

Solitary Game

People sit around
blaming everything on age,
while deep inside they go insane
strictly out of rage.

Flipping through their book of life,
they recall each page,
then place it back upon its shelf.
Throughout Eternity,
they dwell within themselves.
Start again, they wish they could,
not knowing this begins
The second childhood.
Now they forget the kinfolks' names;
they sit around and play
solitary games.

One night she lay awake
and heard the door begin to shake.
Blindly feeling for the gun,
she blew away her own grandson.

**Michael Joel Kyzar
Alexander Jr. High School
Second Place, Poetry**

The Hateful Cold

Poor old man in the snow,
wonder if he'll make it home.
I'll tease his fingertips,
make him think they are dead.
Then, before long, the numbness
will go to his head.
He'll shiver and quiver and
finally freeze.
I'll invite my accomplice
to cover him with her
cruel bleached blanket.

Young Dancer Take Note

The flutter of the butterfly;
Young dancer take note.
The wind against the long tall grass;
Observe through choreographic lenses.
The movement of life
Is the life of movement.

Warm Fuzzies

When I find the place where
warm fuzzies are sown,
I'll go there and wait there
and when they're all grown,
I'll pick you the biggest
bunch,
And with a big ribbon bind
it fast,
To prove that our friendship
will infinitely last.

Laura L. Smith
Brookhaven High School
Third Place, Poetry

Good-Bye

People sing and play; all
it takes is one man one day.

Years of existence, people,
trees, and flowers, born for
that second of searing horror.

Yes, life is divided not into
sex or race, but countries.

And men with one button,
without disgrace,
feel the heat, feel the anger.

Today in the world looms disaster.
no more singing, playing or laughter.

Say good-bye!
fire lights up the sky:
east and west, nowhere to hide.

In one second, terror in the night;
see the world by candle light.

Mitch Rodrigue

Essays

"I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance." — William Faulkner



Survival

The veins stretch throughout as they carry the vital juices, making beauty possible. The leaf begins as a wonderful vibrant green. It perches in the time-hardened, tall oak as if it were a judge delivering a verdict. The sun beams upon it, warming it with unblemished intensity. The leaf sees everything. It watches children playing, lovers walking and businessmen scurrying by.

What does it think? What does it feel?

I imagine that it smiles like a frosty morning with sparkling perception and new life. The juices smoothly flow throughout the leaf as it waves to passing strangers, being a friend to all and acknowledging every presence.

The leaf strives on ceaselessly looking for that day, the day it can breathlessly float to the cushioned earth and just rest. It dreams of being given to a loving mother by her children or being piled sky-high and hearing the laughter of carefree youngsters. It can almost feel the warmth of the young couple as the girl twirls it between her fingers in the dusty moonlight.

The sun rises calmly and that long awaited day arrives. The leaf turns to a golden brown. It shines as before but with a deeper vibrancy—an ageless beauty—in a different light. It falls gracefully from the tree to the cold ground. No one picks it up. No one notices. The child scurries past; the lovers continue on their way; the businessman hurries on. The solitary leaf is alone. No one sees, no one identifies, no one cares.

The wind gusts and blows and twirls the leaf helplessly from place to place but with no destination in sight. The leaf ponders its once lofty place in the shelter of the tall, strong oak looking down on the beautiful world. Where has it all gone? The wise voice of reality speaks: Survive.

The leaf cries out to passersby for just one short glance. They carry on, never noticing, never caring.

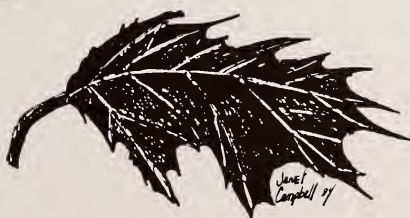
The cold chill of the late autumn morning lingers in despair and loneliness. Aimlessly blown into a whirlpool of gusts and streams, the leaf finally comes to a quiet rest in a nook between a tall fence and an old white home. The leaf is trapped, useless; no one looks at it with concern and smiles or even nods.

A humble, crooked old woman sits in her rocker noticing the entire world carry on. She watches as the wind gusts against the leaf as does soldier against soldier. She rocks back and forth as her memory lingers in the glorious past: her youth.

The children scurry past, lovers continue on their way, and the businessman rushes to his duties. The leaf is abandoned and lonely; the old woman identifies. Their once bright, vibrant places have been

stricken by fate and time. Their memory's knowledge is to be appreciated and learned from. Reality boldly speaks: Survive.

Susan Byrd
First Place, MICROCOSM Award ;
First Place, MJCCWA Competition



Shape Up or Ship Out

"Guaranteed to lose two dress sizes in only fifty-five minutes," the announcer claimed.

I turned the channel.

"Shape up with Aerobicise . . .," three beautiful, slim young ladies said.

I turned to another station.

"I lost fifteen pounds in only one week," the Super Dexatrim model exclaimed.

I turned the T.V. off. That did it. It was time for me to get my flabby body in shape. My measurements could stand much improvement.

First I tried Jane Fonda's workout, but a burn-out is what it turned out to be. By the time I twisted around in the odd position that she instructed, the exercise changed to another unusual contortion. I definitely could not keep up with Jane Fonda.

I realized I must start at a slower pace. I called my friend and we began to walk a couple of miles in the afternoons. Our afternoon schedules became so busy that eventually we forgot about our walking routine.

Next I began to run at school during my free period. I even joined the cross country team so that I might have a motive to keep running. After cross country season came to a close, I continued to jog. Jogging did help a little, but I wanted quick noticeable results. That is when I started lifting weights. I worked mainly on my legs and stomach. I was really sore from all the stretching and bending.

Then I really got on a health binge. I wanted to cut all junk food from my diet and rely strictly on carrots, apples, and water. I hopped on the scales and was delighted that I had lost five pounds, but I tried even harder to reach my weight goal.

I didn't realize at the time that I was slowly wearing myself out. I developed a sharp pain in the lower part of my chest. I just knew it was a pulled muscle. I became so tired. What had I done to myself? I lost weight and a few inches, but was it worth that?

Now I see that a good diet and exercise program takes time to develop and get adjusted to. I should have never expected to have a 36-24-36 figure in only a few weeks. Exercise should be done in moderation and not to the point of fatigue. I'm still determined to be in shape, but I'll give myself time. I'm still curious to know if it really is possible to lose all those inches in only fifty-five minutes like the commercial says.

**Dana Smith
Copiah Academy
Scholarship Award**

Mr. Earnest

As I glanced up the street, I caught a glimpse of a familiar sight to people in Booneville. With sacks full of aluminum cans slung over his shoulder, Mr. Earnest slowly peddled up the hill near our city park. He was dressed in his usual pair of faded denims and a ragged, once white T-shirt. A long-sleeved flannel shirt covered his frail arms, while a wide-brimmed straw hat protected his nearly hairless head from the hot sun's rays. His brown shoes, worn out with no laces, flopped with his every move. His silver whiskers were dripping wet with sweat below his crinkled forehead and bushy brows. Taking a handkerchief from his shirt pocket, Mr. Earnest gently and slowly wiped his weather-beaten face. After gathering all the cans from around the park and rummaging through the garbage, he heaved the sacks over his hunched shoulders and cautiously climbed back on the rusted, mangled bicycle. After accomplishing this tiring task, he sat perched for a few minutes to catch his breath. He wiped his forehead again, leaned forward and like an olympic runner, gave himself a forceful push to get started once again.

I had seen this daily routine many times, but for some reason, today I watched with an unusual interest. Although I knew every move before he made it, I stared at Mr. Earnest with eyes that could not tear themselves away from his sight. There was something deep down inside of me that would not let my attention be focused on anything except for this one little man. I wanted to reach out to him, but I did not know how.

After he had peddled his way out of my sight, I finally managed to turn and make my way back into the house. However, the "out of sight, out of mind" adage did not hold true in this case. In fact, something kept nagging at me, like a two-year old pulling at your pants leg whining for more Fruit Loops.

In one last effort to get this little fellow out of my head, I grabbed a *Seventeen* magazine and threw myself on my bed. As I flipped through the pages, I found one of my favorite sections, "Dear Jack and Jan." I always like to read about other people's problems. It makes me forget about my own. But this time it worked just opposite. One particular letter from a girl in Topeka, Kansas, told of an incident with an elderly woman similar to what I was experiencing with Mr. Earnest. I read intently, the letter and the advice. There it was, in black and white, the answer I needed. My face beamed with excitement as an idea sparked in my head. Anxious not to waste a waking moment, I flung my bedroom door open and ran into the kitchen. I gathered every piece of aluminum I could find, from soda cans to cat food cans, and packed them tightly into a Hefty garbage bag. After I had searched the house thoroughly, I loaded the bag into my brother's wagon and set my sights

on the park. Upon reaching my destination, I scattered my collection across the playground. Mr. Earnest would find a few more cans tomorrow than usual. Maybe in his delight, he would not notice the tuna fish cans being among his collection. After I finished distributing the contents of my bag, I returned home, anxious for morning to come to see if my plan worked. The night was long, but finally morning came and I sat perched on our front steps to wait for Mr. Earnest. Around eight thirty, I saw the man top the hill, park his bike and stare in amazement at the playground. It looked as if he had discovered his treasure chest. After a few moments, he picked up his bag and eagerly began gathering the cans. His feet moved with unusual zest as he cleaned the park. He finished his daily task, hopped on his bike and maneuvered his way back onto the winding side walk with a huge toothless grin on his wrinkled face. There was nothing more satisfying than to see that old man smile and know that smile was for something I had done.

Michelle Smith
Second Place, MICROCOSM Award ;
Third Place, MJCCWA Competition

Ode To My Room

My room is an unusually messy, exciting collaboration of many wonderful things. Despite its dreadful appearance everything fits together in a harmonious way. Each piece of memorabilia has its own special place—whether it be on my bookcase or in some dark, cobwebby corner near my stereo. Although almost anyone else would get lost in my room, I can find even the smallest hairpin on the darkest night by mere sense of touch. It's home to me.

I've carefully planned each inch of space. Near the door, a huge poster I got at Ole Miss and several maps of South Africa are taped on the wall. On the shelves I've placed all my plaques along with a special compartment for all of my band medals. **A Complete Tennyson** along with **Come Home Snoopy** share equal space on my bookshelf. Record albums ranging from **Lion's Band 1982** to the **Rolling Stones** are stacked in haphazard harmony. All of my piles of clothes, make-up, jewelry, sheet music, and photographs are strategically placed.

On my desk are countless study aids such as **How to Take the ACT Test**, **How to Get Into the College of Your Choice**, and **How to Study Without Putting Forth a Lot of Effort**, all of which have never been opened. Piles of construction paper, old newspapers, catalogs of colleges I've never heard of, and an antique IBM typewriter are placed with little or no room left for studying.

Although my room may sound night-marish to some, the times I spend there are priceless. When it's cold outside I enjoy fixing a cup of hot chocolate and curling up with a book by Keats. When I'm discouraged or upset, I shut my doors and play my clarinet. There are windy days when I listen to Sinatra and do exercises . . . or put on the B-52's and dance. Some days, I just watch the life that goes on outside my window or the slow death of my plants.

I love my room. It's home to me. It's the only place I can go when I want to eat a whole bag of chocolate chip cookies without anyone knowing.

Sallie Lee
Copiah Academy
Second Place, Informal Essay

Grandma Wallace

One important source I have for clinging to the past is remembering experiences and occasions spent with my grandparents. With the exception of my Grandpa Wallace, who died when I was three, I remember many wonderful, loving, and humorously told stories from my other three grandparents. My Grandma Wallace especially taught me many lessons about life, morals, setting goals and as she would put it, "making a respectable name for yourself."

I still picture her vividly in my mind though she passed away thirteen years ago. She is thought of often by family and friends and each can recall several instances in which she made them feel special and important. Many lessons that she taught to her ten children were valued and have been passed on in a spirit of love.

Grandma and Grandpa Wallace reared ten children in a large, comfortable house that had high ceilings and a slanted tin roof. It was a stately home built on a hill near Bogue Chitto and Norfield. Even after the children were grown and most had moved away, new memories cropped up with each generation.

As a little girl my excitement grew as we traveled the long, narrow, gravel road that led up to the house. The trees were touching over the road creating a cool, shady effect. It seemed more like a path than a road. My daddy began reminiscing and many times he announced, "When Papa was living we could sit on the front porch and see company turning in. Papa kept it clean as a whistle when he was living." It was plain to see that it hadn't been cleared away in several years because the fence rows were grown up. Except for the occasional appearance of a strand of barbed wire peeping through the overgrown hedges, it was hard to tell that a fence had ever been there.

Upon reaching the house, there was usually someone sitting in one of the two dark green swings that hung at either end of the long front porch. A feeling of hospitality and welcome prevailed and the porch always attracted a crowd. This was the favorite place for telling tales, singing, stretching out for a late afternoon nap, having a relaxing conversation or just sitting and listening to the crickets chirping in the evening. It was one of Grandma's favorite resting places and she kept it neat and tidy, always ready for the next get-together.

From the front yard, which was kept broom-swept to perfection, to the back porch, always covered with a variety of carefully tended potplants, Grandma was constantly scanning the place for improvements. "A place for everything and everything in its place," she pleasantly commanded.

In the hall stood an old wooden curio, about five feet tall with several shelves. Each was adorned with trinkets, what-nots, bisque figurines and any unusual object that caught Grandma's eye—mostly



dime-store products, but priceless to Grandma. The oval fish bowl half-filled with marbles created a kaleidoscope of colors through the clear glass. We knew this curio was not to be anything more than just a place to stand and admire the treasures, no touching. She said it, she meant it, and we knew it. She would slowly meander down the hall softly whispering a whistling effect and admiring the collection in the curio. Grandma was like a child with a new toy when it came to the matter of her collection.

Along with collecting figurines and such, much of her time was spent crocheting, bustling about in the kitchen, or doing some kind deed for a friend or neighbor. "Idle hands are a devil's workshop," she would declare. She sounded tough, but deep inside was a heart of love and concern for all.

As the years progressed and with the death of Grandpa Wallace, many changes were inevitable. Grandma gave up housekeeping, which almost broke her heart, but she conceded to the wishes of her children. She spent her remaining years visiting around with her children. Although she visited the old homestead, kept check on her belongings, and family reunions were held there, it never seemed quite the same.

Grandma wasn't the same either, as the years had taken their toll on her. Usually when seen for the first time people would stare. Her shoulders were severely humped, completely rounded across the back, skinny arms and legs, and silver-gray hair that was always worn in a bun on top of her head. One eye-catching feature was the glasses she wore. They were silver wire rimmed with thick lens, but the lens over the right eye was shaded. People would ask, "Why do you wear those odd glasses?" Then she would tell this story. "One day some men were bird hunting close to our house and a stray shot pierced my head, just behind my right eye." She paused, rubbed her head, then continued. "Because of the strain to my eye, I took the shingles in it," her voice quivered then she added, "it caused me to lose the sight of my right eye. The shaded lens helps cover the red film that stays on it and protects it from the light glare," she explained. When the story was completed the room seemed silent for a moment.

Many times this condition pained her but she was not a complainer and went to great lengths to keep any aches to herself. Reaching out to others for sympathy was not a part of her character.

Grandma Wallace carried many outstanding qualities with her; some were stern but loving, outspoken but sincere, and worthy of any kind remark made about her. Mostly I remember her sternness, an uncanny knack she had to make you want to do the right thing, or make the right decision. She was always ready to offer advice whether wanted or not. "I'm from the old school," she would mumble to herself, "can't get used to these new ways of doing things."

Grandma thought short shorts, short skirts, late hours and too many privileges would be the downfall of the young. "I remember

when I was a girl, my Mama taught me to look like and act like a lady at all times." At this point you could always count on a sermon. "Me and my brothers and sisters did what we was told, cus' if we didn't we'd get a switching." She added quickly, "My mama and daddy was hard on us, we even had to say 'yes, ma'am, and 'no, ma'am,' or wished we had." There would be no getting away from her now. The sermonizing had just begun. "We had to get up early to make a fire in the stove and fill the reservoir with rain water to keep it warm," she continued, "kids nowadays don't even know what a reservoir is or remember a wooden stove for that matter." She would calm down a little realizing we were too scared to say anything. Then a smile would come to her sweet face and we'd all relax a little hoping the sermon had come to an end. She wasn't quite right about us not remembering the old wood stove because I can remember the huge, black, monster of a thing sitting in the middle of her big kitchen. You can bet she shared many a story with her children as she cooked and busied herself.

Many of her stories came with a rhyme, such as this one that went along with a particular tale she told quite often. "In my day, staying out late was unheard of, we jus' sat on the front porch acourtin', not til' all hours either," she added. "Anyway, we was acourtin', me and my beau," she took a deep breath then continued, "then the old squeaky, screen door opened and Mama recited, " 'Nine O'clock nothin' said' you go home and we'll go to bed.' " A hearty chuckle always followed from a member of her audience, usually me. Getting back to the story, she announced, "Needless to say, my fella left and I burst into tears, knowing I'd die any minute. Well, I didn't and I even lived to tell about it," she finished once again my favorite tale.

There were many lessons I learned from her: honesty, patience, respect for mankind and love. All of these could have been a part of her epitaph and would have suited her perfectly.

Bertha Victoria McCaffrey Wallace, born 1885, died 1971. I hope the same sense of caring, responsibility, love, warmth, endurance, and humor will add to memories that I leave with my children and even their children.

When my daughter begins dating, I think I'll try my great grandmother's rhyme, "Nine O'clock, nothin' said; you go home and we'll go to bed."

Wanda Kay Burns
MICROCOSM Award

P. J.

The first thing that usually creeps into my subconscious is the sound of the dishwasher being unloaded, of plates being stacked, glasses being shelved and silverware being unceremoniously dumped into a drawer. In the background of noises, a police scanner is running up and down its program, pausing to listen in on a car being directed to somewhere or to hear the dispatcher ask Bravo-2 its 10-20.

As I lie there drifting slowly back to where my dream is on hold, the front door slams and through the open window I hear the sound of slippers slapping concrete. I don't look for I know who it is and what he is doing.

A picture of a short man with a bushy brow and a wrinkled face, in a short blue robe, bouncing as he walks to the bottom of the drive comes up on the screen behind my closed eyes and I smile. I hope the paper hits the drive soon or I'll hear that door every five minutes until it arrives.

I slowly start to sift through the other sounds that are competing with each other for P.J.'s attention. He usually has two scanners running, the small t.v. for early morning farm news and weather and one radio with church music for balance.

A car passes in front of the house and I hear a newspaper hitting the ground, followed shortly by the door slamming, slippers slapping, the door slamming, then a chair protesting as it scrapes across the floor.

The phone is due to ring next; it always does about this time, for P.J. is reading the funeral notices and soon his brother will call.

"Did I wake you?"

"No."

"Who's in there—any bodies we knew?" will be the next question, and P.J. will answer by reading every soul listed and when and where the deceased will be buried.

The phone is P.J.'s link to those he hasn't seen in a long time. He calls them after gleaning a number from the old phone books he keeps put away, so Nana won't throw them out.

He knows everyone and everyone knows him.

At 6:45 sharp he snags a baseball cap off the hall tree, decorated with about twenty-five of them, and he is gone. But if you need him for something, in the next ten to fifteen minutes, I'm sure that you can find him at the corner donut shop swapping stories of yesterday's events.

On Saturday afternoon you can find him watching his favorite t.v. show—Mid-South Wrestling. I have offered to take him to see the real life sports spectacular whenever it comes to town, but he always has something else doing and says "can't this time, maybe next time." I

understand that he did go once and a wrestler got dumped into his lap, and now he prefers to sit in the relative safety of his own front room to view any wrestling that goes on.

At supper time when that hand, closed up, thumb and forefinger sticking out like a gun, points at you, it's your turn to say grace, followed by two taps with his fork on his plate when you are done. If he reaches down and tucks the end of the table cloth in his shirt front, you know someone forgot to put the napkins on the table. I've learned not to swirl the last cubes of ice in my tea glass for P.J. will say "Janet, get Robert some ice," or not to stand in front of the refrigerator, with the door open, for the invariable response is "did you lose something?"

He spends the evenings reading newspapers, some three or four days old, brought in to him by truck drivers who work for the same company he does. The **St. Louis Post Dispatch**, The **Denver Post**, The **L.A. Times** or the **San Antonio Press**, all battered, all piled up in one corner of the kitchen.

At night he is off to bed at 8 o'clock, even if there is company, but he will get up to answer any phone call that is for him, never mind whether he is sleeping or if it is two in the morning. And, of course, if you happen to be thumbing the selector switch on late night t.v. and Special Delivery Jones is working out with Superfly Snooka on Madison Square Garden Wrestling you had better call Papa Joe.

Robert Reese
MICROCOSM Award



Sneaker Shopping

Somewhere in the land of the free, it's that time again. Another pair of good old trusty sneakers needs to be purchased. The procrastinating shopper has put the dreaded task off long enough. The worn treads, which have been as faithful as an old dog through the years, just won't last another skip down the sidewalk. His almost-worn-out, black high-top Converse of yesterday really don't look like they did the day he bought them. The black Converse were the perfect picture of style the day they were bought: thick soles that were as white as newly-driven snow; streaming, long, white shoe strings which were perfectly laced; and the strongly-woven canvas that was as black as coal. However, with the passage of time and the extent of exercise, the snow-white soles have faded to a dull, dingy brown; the streaming shoelaces have gradually disintegrated to a mere, four-hole laceup; and the strongly-woven canvas has worn to a thin protection of threads. And maybe the purchase he made in 1973 isn't as stylish as it was ten years ago.

Although he has dreaded this moment for some time, excitement overtakes the shopper as he presses his nose to the window and peers with glaring eyes through the glass. Inside, countless fabrics and materials line the walls like a multicolored rainbow streaking across a pale sky. Astonished at what he has come face-to-face with, the shopper is surrounded by countless brand names—Converse, Adidas, Nike, K Swiss, Tretorn, Puma and so many more. They each hang upon the wall, glittering with newness, like diamonds brilliantly sparkling in the bright sunlight.

The new purchase will have to meet specific qualifications of the conscientiously-thrifty shopper. They will have to be as tough as nails, nothing short of durable, and able to endure great amounts of strenuous activity. The new pair of feet protectors won't be worn with gentleness; football, basketball and tennis aren't gentle sports. The prolonged decision has been made to stick with the ever-faithful Converse brand, but what color and fabric? The choice can be derived from an array and assortment of exciting and vivacious fabrics. There is a smooth leather and a soft, yet strong canvas. The gleaming eyes of the shopper reflect the various shades of sky blue, sea green, candy-apple red, coal black, sunshine yellow and hot pink. "Pink!" he thinks. "How sissy!" As his wandering eyes and shocked mind move along the shoe-filled walls, his eye is caught by something that appears out of place. Did someone leave his checkerboard hanging in a shoe store? No, it's a pair of unusual, charcoal-black and bright-red checkered tennis shoes. This is the shoe which blows the shopper's mind. Confused by the way time has changed the style of shoes and unable to make a decision, he leaves this wild zoo of multicolored rubber, leather and canvas in a state of awe.

As his feet plod wearily down the sidewalk once again, the fatigued eyes of the discouraged fall to his sparsely-protected feet. He thinks to himself, "What's wrong with a pair of black high-top tennis shoes? Maybe that flopping piece of rubber can be glued back on, and just maybe, somehow, that frayed hole which exposes the torn sock, which exposes the blistered toe can be mended."

Jane Lucas

Structure Fishing

The word **structure** means different things to different fishermen. But to bass, it's all the same. "Home." In bass clubs and tackle shops, anglers speak of "structure fishing" as some advanced technique of probing deep water with worms, jigs, spoons or other deep-working lures. In part, that's true. In the broadest definition, though, structure is any object or feature in the water that is different from whatever surrounds it—at any depth, from 9 inches to 90 feet.

To find bass at any depth, then, remember that these fish are object-oriented creatures. They lurk close to objects, seeking protection from other predators, shade from the sun, slack water out of steady current and an ambush point for bait-fish.

Fishermen most often search for bass around "visible structure," objects which can be seen above, or just beneath the water: grassbeds, lily pads, logs, stick-ups, weeds, moss, boathouses, pilings, standing timber, moored boats, duck blinds, fence rows, and practically anything else visible from above the surface.

But sometimes fish are more numerous around "sunken structure" out of the angler's sight: flooded timber, underwater islands, old roadbeds, house foundations, channels, ridges, points, stump beds, rocks and boulders.

Whether you see it with your eyes or pinpoint it with a depthfinder and topographical maps, the rule is the same: Find the cover, find the bass. That's how to do it.

Raleigh Charpentier
Brookhaven High School
Third Place, Informal Essay

The Colors of Our Lives

The street lights glared into the still darkness and the crickets blared in the sweet quietness. There were few people in view and the night had a calm peacefulness about it that made it seem different although it was the same as any other night on campus.

Activities of the day stumbled into each other, flowing together like a swift moving stream as they rushed through my head, demanding my attention as the precipice demands the attention of its challenger. My thoughts fought for the attention that they had won in previous battles but in spite of the difficulty of the fight, I would not give in. My thoughts of the day's activities could wait. This moment was for me, me alone, me only. I pushed the current of thoughts aside for a later time and breathed in the refreshing, renewing, revitalizing spirit that seemed to fill the air.

In a flash the days go by; things, people, activities all take us away from ourselves, yet in a moment of reflection we can touch our souls and leave reality far behind. In years to come these moments may be lost, forgotten by the one who was once a seeker of solemnity, but yet these moments are as important as the bustle and the hustle of living our lives for in these moments we find the mold of our being, our true selves.

The colors of the rainbow are beautiful to see and so God elevated them into the view of those who would happen upon them, without even the challenge to search for the hidden treasures that may be beyond. The brightness of the day, our rainbow of activities, is beautiful to see and so we are drawn to share them with others and to place into the heights of our thoughts.

Unlike the beautiful rainbow are the shades of the night. The calm solemn colors that at first glance appear dull but with a closer look pull us to them with an irresistible force that captures our attention and holds us prisoner for the duration of the night.

We need both modes to understand what we are truly like. Who can say which is more important, for without one the enjoyment of the other would be lost. We do not always take time for our quiet nights. Thoughts of our daily activities blind us from seeing into ourselves and we find that our souls are too far away to reach and reality too close to really see. The days have gone and our quiet moments to reflect are lost, stored in the archives of our minds for no one to ever search through and reflect on.

The lights glared in the still darkness and the crickets blared in the sweet quietness. Another day ended and at the end of the rainbow was a pot of gold. I found the gold of the night in the reflection of the colors of the day, in the beautifully solemn colors of a quiet moment with and within myself.

Kathy Bucknor

Canes Remain

The tall green stalks of cane hold and hide many memories. They've seen everything from army camps, dug out for G. I. Joe, to my brother's candy hidden to be eaten later. Fields of cane are as much a part of Louisiana as they are a part of me. I've never harvested cane, but I have chewed plenty of it. To a city person, a cane field may seem an odd or dirty place to play, but what better place for Cajun boys to spend an afternoon? I can remember so vividly swimming in the murky waters of Bayou Lafource on long summer days, then running and rolling through the choppy, moist rows of cane until night fell upon us like a blanket of humidity. After dark would be the time for spine-chilling tales of monsters that little boys were convinced lived there. We would all run out of the cane fields screaming, while the hair on our necks stiffened and our legs turned to jelly.

Of course, those good days like all good times came to an end with harvest time. Then the sweet cane turned into stinking black smoke and blazing fields. But when the green grew back, the sounds also returned; boys playing army or cracking the stalks ready to be peeled and chewed or perhaps humming to a little battery-operated radio. Although the farmers in the area did not mark their growing season by our activities, we planned our play periods according to them. So, to my favorite place as a child, may you forever grow as tall and green as the heavens are high.

Scott Silverii

Robotics: Past, Present, and Future

Robots are mechanical devices that perform some task under automatic control. The word **robot** is derived from the Czechoslovakian word **robota**, which means forced labor. It came into use after the production of the play, **Rossum's Universal Robots**, in 1921 by the Czech dramatist, Karel Copek. In this play the robot was a mechanical man. Even though, the idea of automation and automatic behavior goes back many thousands of years, the advances in robotics today and the expectation of improvements in the future offers an exciting challenge.

Statues that move and talk were the subject of speculation among the early Egyptians and Greeks. In the first century A.D., Hero of Alexandria suggested automatic door openers, fountains, and other engines operated by air and steam. The Chinese invented an astronomical clock with an escapement controlled by a flow of liquid. Leonardo da Vinci created a mechanical lion that walked and roared. As science and technology advanced, the possible creation and motivation of life by the forces of electricity was investigated by scientists during the 17th and 18th centuries. In the late 18th century, the mechanical ingenuity of men such as Jacques de Vaucanson and Henri Maillerdet constructed lifelike automations that could write, draw pictures, and play musical instruments. The mechanics of earlier robots have in many cases been replaced by electrical micro-circuits and solid-state devices. The modern robot performs its tasks by following instructions, that is by processing and acting on information fed into it, very often in the form of a computer program.

As research advanced, robot technology has divided into two major branches, one technological and the other scientific. In the development of practical industrial robots, the primary criteria are reliability and cost effectiveness. In the scientific study of robot potentialities, the emphasis is on exploring fundamental questions of sensory perception, motor control, and intelligent behavior.

Today most of the industrial robots in use in factories throughout the world employ servo-mechanisms. Servo-controlled robots are programmed by leading them through a sequence of positions. A human tutor uses a hand-held control box with a rate control button for each of the robot's joints. Working with these buttons, the tutor guides the robot to the desired position for each step of the program. By pushing a button the tutor can record the position of each joint. When the program is played back, the control system simply commands each joint to move to the position recorded for each step. Once the robot goes into operation on the production line, it repeats the program over and over, moving from one step to the next according to a fixed timing cycle, either on completion of the previous step or in response to a signal from external machinery.

A more recent development is the electronic memory which enables a robot to store several programs and to select one in response to different input commands or to feedback from external sensors. For example, robots that spot-weld automobile bodies can be programmed to handle a variety of car models intermixed on an assembly line.

A great majority of industrial robots have little capability for sensing or modifying their actions to compensate for unexpected or unknown conditions in their environment. Feedback is limited to information about joint positions combined with timing signals. Most robots can function only in environment where the objects to be manipulated are always precisely located in the proper position for the robot to grasp. This is obviously not the case in most situations. In order to deal with unexpected situations a robot must be able to sense the condition of the external world and modify its behavior.

One important sensory input is vision. Unfortunately, robot "vision" presents a difficult problem. Television cameras can be used to sense patterns of light and dark just as the human eye does, but the analysis of such data is extremely complex. The human vision system resolves any difficulty by the ability to observe motion, to see in stereo, to project stored knowledge on the incoming visual data, and other highly sophisticated mechanisms that are not yet understood. To duplicate these capabilities in robots will be beyond man's capability for many years.

There are other types of sensors used besides vision. Force, touch and proximity sensors are provided to the robot supplying corrective information for misalignments. Forces are sometimes measured by detecting motor currents or different hydraulic pressures in the appropriate joint activators. Force sensors consist of strain gauges mounted on the robot's wrist or on the worktable that holds the workpiece as the robot mounts gaskets or tightens screws. Most touch sensors are simple switches that transmit a signal when two surfaces make contact. Proximity (nearness) sensors are usually more complicated. Typical systems employ a laser beam or a beam of infrared radiation and determine proximity by measuring the energy reflected by the target. For distances a little over a yard, the range can be computed by measuring the transit time of a laser pulse. A robot with well-designed proximity sensors can search for objects of uncertain position and move toward them at high speed without danger of collision. These techniques have made it possible for robots to operate in somewhat unstructured environments. Efforts to equip a robot with modest intellectual capacities have occupied workers in the field of artificial intelligence for many years.

Some of the advantages of using robots are reducing labor costs by cutting the number of workers needed to do a job, reducing operating expenses by reducing waste during production by workers, and producing some products more accurately than machines controlled by workers, resulting with fewer products to be thrown away for not meeting standards of quality.

The major disadvantages in robot use are the need for careful planning and research, the high cost of producing robots, and the fact that automation will force many workers out of their jobs.

The applications of robots already run into the hundreds and the list is growing. It seems possible that the impact of robots on the production of goods and services may equal or even exceed that of a steam engine and electric motor. In time robots will be put to work in the home, laboratory, and hospital. Assuming further progress, researchers have anticipated this expansion as soon as the 21st century.

Debra Hooper
First Place, MICROCOSM Award ;
Third Place, MJCCWA Competition

Lebanon:

Mission of Mercy or Mission Impossible

In October of 1983, as a Mideast power struggle escalated in Lebanon, President Reagan sent a few troops to Lebanon as a peace-keeping force. A simple gesture, hardly taken notice of; it seemed to be nothing major.

Then on October 23, a little after 5:00 a.m., a red Mercedes truck bearing a suicidal terrorist, drove through open iron gates of Marine Headquarters, passed two guards with unloaded guns, and easily ran through a roll of barbed wire. A terrorist then smiled at a stunned Marine attempting to load his rifle, and detonated 12,000 pounds of explosives. Two hundred and forty-one men were killed.

Shocked Americans realized the magnitude of the situation and wondered why American troops were there in the first place. Although the President has remained resolute that Americans should not give in to terrorism by backing away, he is not without opposition. A Harris poll revealed that 64 per cent of Americans believe that all Marines should be pulled out of Lebanon within a few weeks or months. Influential Democrats and Republicans are also breathing down the President's neck to withdraw the Marines. Constituent-conscious congressmen are demanding it—because they are catching numerous complaints from their voters. Congressman Lee Hamilton stated the opinions of many when he said, "We're not going to achieve it: a solid, united Lebanon from border to border. We're not willing to commit the military assees to achieve that objective."

Of course after the bombing incident, measures have been taken to remedy safety oversights. There is a new policy for reducing the number of troops exposed to danger by moving them nightly from the highly risky Beirut airport. The President is hopeful that the implementation of his security plan will improve matters in Lebanon. Meanwhile the "peace-keeping" forces are taking extra precautions.

A case such as this can not help but cause Americans to look back and remember a most forgettable war. The Vietnam War was so opposed internally that it was as much an issue as a war. The country somehow became involved in a war that no one really wanted to be in. Most agreed that the United States was paying too high a price in lives, money, effort, and emotion in order to lend a hand to a cause it did not have a stake in. However, some still held that the United States had to defend its honor and values. But both sides lost in the end.

Certainly the Lebanon crisis can not be reasonable compared to the Vietnam situation, but the first fruits of Vietnam were also spawned in peaceful goodwill. War was never officially declared: only it did not feel as if there was no war. About 56,800 U.S. troops were dead because of Vietnam; about 303,700 wounded, and about 780 missing, and unnumbered soldiers were left haunted mentally for the

rest of their lives. Nothing was solved. Vietnam lay in ruin and the South Vietnamese ended up surrendering to the Communists. Nightmares of this make any later policies thin ice.

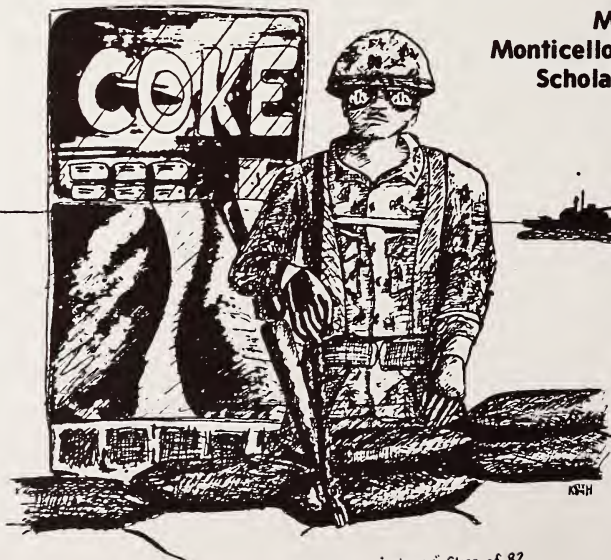
Claude Pepper, a Florida Congressman, said his constituents "see nothing but quicksand over there." It is in the sense that the longer they stay, the more difficult it is to get out. Leaving at this point could mean foreign policy disaster. In Lebanon's condition, any small variation could tip the scales. The pulling out of U.S. Marines could lead to the collapse of the Gemayel government. World reactions would be unpredictable. There simply is no graceful way out.

And if they stay, things would be more predictable; more death, more casualties, more money, and more political entanglements. While Reagan insists that terrorists should not determine where U.S. troops should go, columnist William F. Buckley Jr. argues that neither should they decide where and when U.S. troops should remain. But complex political matters really mean nothing to the young widow, the mother who lost her son, or the little boy who will never see his big brother again.

Efforts are being made to remove the unsuspecting heroes from their perilous roles. President Reagan and the other officials are working on a program to train the Lebanese army and gradually pull out without causing international friction. Also, there is still hope of a compromise and permanent cease-fire.

Meanwhile, Americans have to hope for an answer that will do what is best for the nation and safeguard military forces as well as values.

Melissa Lewis
Monticello High School
Scholarship Award



'Lebanon' Class of 82.

The Element of Revenge in Othello

In William Shakespeare's play *Othello*, Iago becomes obsessed with the idea of revenge because he feels he is being taken advantage of by others. Thinking Othello has had an affair with his wife Emilia, and Othello's choosing Cassio instead of Iago as top lieutenant, forces Iago's trait of jealousy to surface. Cultivating his evil garden with deceit, Iago nurtures Othello's seed of jealousy. As a farmer tends his garden in hopes of successfully bringing forth fruit, so Iago strives for the success of sweet revenge.

Iago concludes that the only cure to soothe his jealousy is to destroy the lives of those who caused it. In the first act, Iago admits he plans to get revenge but for now he has no structured format to follow. He, however, gains a pawn, the naive Roderigo, by conning him into believing that he can soon have Desdemona, Othello's wife, if he helps Iago with his plans.

In the second act, Iago by chance witnesses Cassio taking Desdemona's hand in courtesy. Iago plans to use this innocent act to play on Othello's jealousy by insinuating Desdemona's unfaithfulness with Cassio. "He takes her by the palm. With as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio" (II, i, 165). Iago's diabolical mind devises jealousy as the root to bring destruction to others and his own success. Using Roderigo to get Cassio fired, Cassio must now beg Desdemona to appeal to Othello for him. Desdemona's goodness will prove to be a noose around her neck.

Pretending to be a wise counsel and true friend, Iago waters Othello's jealousy with half-truths and insinuations about Cassio's action with Desdemona. Reaching the climax in the third act, Othello's character is eternally transformed from one of trust and love to one of ambivalence and despise. Pretending to be something he's not, Iago advises Othello, "O, beware, my lord, of jealousy! It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock the meat it feeds on" (III, iii, 165-167). With Othello wearing his feelings on his sleeve, Iago is sure his seed of jealousy will soon blossom if he can prove the Moor to be a cuckold.

Watering Othello's jealousy with a double dose, Iago presents a convincing charade of Cassio and Desdemona's affair. In actual fact Iago is conversing with Cassio about his strumpet, Bianca. The hidden Othello, unaware of the truth, thinks they are discussing his wife. All through the play, Iago is a master-mind at taking simple, innocent situations and twisting them into something evil to be used in his favor. Iago's escapade with Cassio is successful in convincing Othello of Desdemona's unfaithfulness and Othello appoints Iago as top lieutenant. Thus, Iago's seed of jealousy blossoms in full bloom in the tint of sanguine.

In the last act the fruit of jealousy is brought forth. Under Iago's suave persuasion, Roderigo acts and unknowingly prevents Iago from being discovered as a hypocrite. Meanwhile, Othello, smothers Desdemona in their bedroom. All the concerned characters, ending up in Desdemona's chambers to report to Othello, are awe-struck by Othello's violence. Examining the circumstances, Iago's wife Emilia presents her conclusion of Iago being the farmer who has carefully cultivated this garden of evil and brought about such disaster. At this revelation, Iago murders Emilia and Othello takes his own life in the disgust of his ignorance.

Although Iago was successful in bringing forth fruit from his seed of jealousy, he was unable to harvest it because of his wife's revelation, leaving him at the mercy of the law. Such is the case whenever jealousy is the seed. Although one may enjoy the cultivation of it to bring forth fruit, one seldom is able to enjoy the harvest.

Kathy Haralson
Second Place, MICROCOSM Award ;
Third Place, MJCCWA Competition



1984: *A Reality?*

By interchanging the last two numbers of the year 1948 George Orwell derived the title of one of the most prophetic and controversial books in history. In Orwell's novel **1984** he envisioned a world dominated by three superpowers in which individuals had little or no control over their own thoughts. Although the real world of 1984 isn't quite that grim, it is rather fascinating and a bit scary to discover just how alike today's 1984 is compared to Orwell's **1984**.

The three superpowers Orwell dreamed of in **1984** were a result of a nuclear nightmare. After this nightmare they planned for peace and security through continuous local wars among the lesser powers. Although there has yet been no all out nuclear war one can not doubt the frequency and destructiveness of many local wars. Unlike Orwell's superpowers, the superpowers of today—Russia, China, and the United States—can not completely control these local wars and become involved themselves. It is very doubtful that Orwell's totally repressive government will arrive, but some of the basic elements may already be present. Americans enjoy the greatest amount of liberty in the world with all types of personal and political freedoms. Nevertheless the role of the federal government in one's life has become rather involved recently. The government has acquired numerous amounts of classified information and has placed severe restrictions on those who handle it.

The most fascinating likeness between the two that threatens America most is technology. Advanced technology has made our lives more convenient, but the major invasion of privacy by this technology has not been realized. The greatest advance of all time is the computer. It can store any kind of information about a person; consequently, the files are readily available to anyone who pushes the right button. Radio transmitters, directional microphones, laser beams, and computer chips can almost always determine anyone's whereabouts at any given time. Scientists have even discovered a way to alter genes in unborn children. They think that eventually political and economic motives could be etched into one's genes. With such advanced technology falling into the wrong hands, **1984** could easily become a reality.

The language used by "Big Brother" was a mixture of doublethink and Newspeak. It is very frightening to wonder if the United States uses its own form of Newspeak. Words like **revenue enhancers**, **Peacekeeper**, **protective reaction**, **adjusted behavior** and many others are being heard more and more in the media.

Just how closely do the themes of 1984 apply to the real world of 1984? As long as people are willing to desire and fight for freedom, today's earth can never end up the tyrannical earth of 1984.

**Kimberly Smith
Brookhaven High School
Second Place, Formal Essay**

Jobs and Teens: Good or Bad

Times have changed since the early 1900's. The country is growing, and in the cities more and more stores are springing up. The managers are always looking for people to hire, so nowadays many teens have after-school jobs. They are seen stocking shelves, unloading trucks, sweeping floors, helping customers find products, and checking the customers out. Teachers and parents often look on part-time work as a disadvantage. Sometimes teens do not turn homework in, are not prepared for tests, and at home they do not have enough spare time to spend with their families. Even so, after-school jobs for teens are a great advantage.

In the first place an after-school job gives the teen responsibility. Responsibility means trustworthiness and reliability. The teen is given the responsibility to make sure the customers are happy and that they have no complaints. In retail stores, the teen is constantly meeting people. If the customers need help, the teen should be there waiting to help them. The teen should always be friendly and helpful to the people. Also, when the teen is assigned to a particular job it is his responsibility to see that the job is finished, and that he does not get off schedule.

Besides the responsibility, the teen also gains experience by doing, observing, or listening on the job. When working the teen goes through the same daily routine as he will when he gets a permanent job. He is learning to work under a boss, gaining skills that he may use later, and having an opportunity to see what job tasks he enjoys or dislikes so that he can begin to make career choices.

Finally an after-school job gives the teen a sense of achievement. The teen can be proud of himself or herself for applying for the job, getting it, and earning a salary. That makes the teen feel independent because he doesn't have to go to his parents for money.

After-school jobs for teens are a great advantage. With a job a teen is gaining three things: experience, responsibility, and a sense of achievement. When teens finish high school and/or college with job experience to their credit and look for a permanent job, they will have those three things going for them.

**Toni Hunt
Magee High School
Third Place, Formal Essay**

Analysis of "Araby"

Vain Love

In "Araby," James Joyce shows the disappointment that usually accompanies puppy love. But delving deeper into the characteristics of love, Joyce uses religious symbolism to show the conflict between vanity and holiness as represented by the girl and boy in the story.

We find instant conflict in the beginning of "Araby" as the boy looks through books belonging to a priest who recently died. Of these books the boy picks a favorite, not because of its reading quality, but because of its faded pages. Unknowingly, the boy has picked the only book there that is not of a religious nature. It's about a French mercenary's life, a life hardly recognizable as religious. This unconscious pick the boy makes gives a hint of the struggle he is soon to encounter.

The essence of the conflict is revealed in the sixth paragraph of "Araby." As the boy accompanies his mother to the market, the girl's name comes to his lips in prayers and he imagines he carries a chalice safely through a number of foes. This is odd because, as Joyce illustrates, the market is a place most hostile to thoughts of romance.

The chalice, representing the girl, shows the pride that exists in the boy. The boy lifts himself so high as to imagine the girl a holy object and himself her savior from danger.

The boy dreams of talking to her, but he cannot get the courage to do so. Finally the girl speaks to him about the Araby bazaar, asking him if he were going. In the process of the conversation, the boy finds that she isn't going because she has a convent retreat to attend that weekend. Again you see how holiness keeps them apart. One possessed with purity, the other with vanity. Also, Joyce notes that during the girl's conversation with the boy, she is turning a silver bracelet around her wrist. Silver, ever since the church was established, has been a symbol of purity and holiness. The girl fondles the bracelet almost as if to ward off some corrupting influence imposing itself upon her.

Again, the boy exposes his vanity by saying he will bring her something from the bazaar, as if she expects something from him.

When he finally gets to the bazaar the boy finds that almost all the stalls are closed. All is dark and quiet, as Joyce puts it "A silence like that which pervades a church after a service." Though you miss most messages if you arrive after the service, here the boy finds one.

Approaching one of the bazaar stalls, the boy attempts to gain the interest of a young lady attending the stall. But she relates to him only out of a sense of duty, anxious to return to the company of two young gentlemen. He realizes his foolishness for the first time here. Possessed by his vanity towards the other girl, he expected immediate attention from the girl at the bazaar. When she fails to give it to him,

he sees himself for the first time as he truly is, "a creature driven and derided by vanity."

Duane Derrick
MICROCOSM Award



COLLEGE CONTRIBUTORS

- GAYLE ANDERS**, who designed the cover for *Microcosm*, is from Natchez. Gayle is a freshman art major.
- CYNTHIA BAILEY**, from Bogue Chitto, is a sophomore history (secondary education) major. Reading and writing are some of her interests. After Co-Lin, Cynthia plans to attend Mississippi College.
- LORETTA BOYD***, an art major, is from Bogue Chitto. Loretta, a sophomore, plans to attend Mississippi State University to study commercial art.
- KATHY BUCKNOR**, from Harrisville, is a freshman social work major. She enjoys singing, literature, art, and drama.
- WANDA KAY BURNS**, an elementary education major, is from Lloyd Star where her husband Roe Burns coaches football. Kay stays busy with her school work and her three children's activities.
- SUSAN BYRD** is a freshman psychology major from Crystal Springs. She plans to attend a senior college, after graduation from Co-Lin, and hopes to become a counsellor of psychology. Susan enjoys writing, music, and anything that deals with people.
- JANET CAMPBELL***, President of the Art Club, is an art major. Janet, from Brookhaven, will attend Mississippi State University in the fall.
- SANDRA COOPER** is a sophomore from Crystal Springs. This is Sandra's second year to win first place in both local and state junior college writing contests. She and her 11 year old son Allen enjoy playing tennis together.
- NORMAN CUPIT***, a sophomore art major, is from Brookhaven. Norman, active in many school activities, plans to attend a senior college to study art.
- DUANE DERRICK***, from Wesson, is a sophomore at Co-Lin. He has a combined major, commercial art and military science, and he plans to attend the University of Southern Mississippi to obtain his degree. Duane enjoys Indian lore, exercise, exploring, hiking, art, and fishing.
- LARRY FLOWERS*** is a pre-architecture major. He is a freshman from Natchez.
- KATHY HARALSON**, a sophomore science-education major, is from Bogue Chitto. Some of her interests include playing the piano, running, pool, dancing, basketball, and tennis. Kathy plans to attend the University of Southern Mississippi to obtain her degree.
- DEBRA HOOPER**, from Gretna, Louisiana, is a freshman at Co-Lin. She has a double major, accounting and data processing. Fishing, playing softball and reading are among her hobbies. After graduation from Co-Lin, Debra plans to attend USM. Eventually, she hopes to become a certified public accountant.

GLORIA GILL KELLEMS, a journalism major from Brookhaven, graduated from Co-Lin in December, 1983.

DAVID KYZAR, a sophomore art major, is from Brookhaven. He is married and has one child, Kristopher Joel age seven. David plans to attend a senior college after Co-Lin. Some of his interests are poetry, music, and the outdoors.

JANE LUCAS, from Brookhaven, is a freshman accounting major. Dancing and reading are some of Jane's interests. She plans to marry in June and return to Co-Lin next fall.

CLARK MANUEL is an engineering major from Brookhaven. His hobbies include playing the guitar and reading.

HEIDI MARLER*, a sophomore from Crystal Springs, divides her interests between art and music. Heidi is an active member of the BSU.

MELISSA REDD*, a sophomore from Bogue Chitto, is President of the English Club. Melissa plans to attend Mississippi State University to major in art. Melissa's hobbies are books, softball and horses.

ROBERT REESE, from Jackson, is a freshman engineering major. He has been married eight years to Janet Yarbrow Reese. Robert's interests include camping and horses.

MITCH RODRIGUE is a freshman from Thibodaux, Louisiana. He has a combined major of physical education and history. Football and golf are among his hobbies. Mitch plans to return to Co-Lin next fall and hopes to receive a football scholarship to a university.

MARY ANN RUTLAND, from Monticello, is a freshman art major. She is married to Conly Rutland and they have two children, Amy and Micah. Mary Ann enjoys drawing, painting, walking, exercising, cake decorating, fishing, and especially people. She is uncertain about her plans after Co-Lin.

SCOTT SILVERII is a freshman secondary education major from Thibodaux, Louisiana. He plans to attend Nicholls State University after Co-Lin. Scott enjoys athletics, writing, traveling, and history.

KEITH SMITH* is a sophomore fine arts major. He is from Jackson and has been married for four years. Keith enjoys commercial design and advertising. He plans to work in this area as a free lance commercial artist. Keith's cover design won second place in the MJCCWA competition; it will appear in **The Junior College Writer**.

MICHELLE SMITH, from Monticello, is a church-vocation major. She enjoys tennis, cross-stitching, swimming, and camping. Michelle plans to attend Mississippi College, and then she plans to attend seminary for two years and specialize in youth ministry.

EDDIE TUNEBURG is a freshman business administration major from Wesson. He plans to attend the University of Southern

Mississippi, after Co-Lin, and obtain a degree in corporate law. Eddie enjoys music, reading, and writing.

* These students provided the illustrations for **Microcosm**.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Each year the English Department of Copiah-Lincoln Junior College holds a student literary competition for college students and for area high school students. The college entries, selected by the English faculty for first and second in the various categories, compete in the Mississippi Junior College Creative Writing Association competition and in other state-wide competitions. The English faculty and **MICROCOSM** staff judged the junior competition. The awards are listed after the writer's name in the body of **MICROCOSM**. The winners of honorable mention poems, short story, and informal essay in the high school competition are listed below:

Poetry

"My Heart's Visitor"	Ema Louise Dixon Brookhaven High School
"What Am I"	Joy Smith Wesson Attendance Center
"Journey"	Vicki Ward New Hebron Attendance Center

Short Story

"Aftermath"	Chris Powell Brookhaven High School
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Informal Essay

"Of Things Past or the Present"	Karen Kimbie Adams County Christian School
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The **MICROCOSM** staff appreciates the support the administration gives our written efforts.

Billy B. Thames, President
Eddie M. Smith, Dean of Instruction
Jim Kyzar, Business Manager
Alton Ricks, Dean of Students
Russell Ray, Director of Recruitment and Development

Each English teacher provides the students with challenge, stimulus, and encouragement which creates a climate for real writing.

Durr Walker, Jr., Chairman of Division of Humanities
Sharon Alexander, English Instructor
Nancy Dykes, English Instructor
Keith McDaniel, English Instructor





